

community-based organizations. He is involved with the following organizations: Secretary of the Association of Brooklyn Clergy for Community Development, Secretary of the African American Clergy and Elected Officials of Brooklyn, Vice President of The Metropolitan Interdenominational Ministers Conference, Parent Body Member Eastern Baptist Association, President of the North Bay Tenant Association of Coney Island, and President of The Men and Women's Interdenominational Ministers Conference of Brooklyn, New York.

Rev. Dr. Bullock is a man of vision. He is a multi-talented person who is considered an excellent Preacher and Teacher, a builder of ideas and developer of community motivation, and a master decision maker. He is steadfast in his beliefs and a loyal supporter of the missions of the organizations to which he belongs. He consistently endorses the politics of community empowerment and the practical projects which bring the benefits of empowerment to the poor.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to salute Rev. Dr. James S. Bullock as a distinguished "Point of Light" for all Americans.

HONORING A HOOSIER HERO:
KATHY ALFKE

HON. DAVID M. McINTOSH

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 6, 2000

Mr. McINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a very special Hoosier who has been chosen to receive the Patrick Groff Teacher of the Year Award. This national award will be presented by the National Right to Read Foundation, an organization devoted to increasing literacy in America through scientifically-based reading research. Only one award is given each year, and this year the award will go to Indiana's own Kathy Alfke.

In addition to teaching reading skills to fourth and sixth graders at Riverside school in Indianapolis, Kathy teaches other teachers, parents, aides, tutors, and principals the Direct Approach Method, a reading instruction technique which brings amazing results. Since last February, she has taught teachers at 12 Indianapolis Public Schools and is currently instructing educators in at least 15 other schools. In her home town of New Palestine, she provided training for the reading tutors and the Director for Instruction at the town's newest school. In all, Kathy trained over 60 teachers this summer and has taken on more students this fall.

Her efforts are making a difference. Having taught the Direct Approach to Reading and Spelling teachers at Switzerland County schools, they scored sixth in the state on the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP). Kathy has contributed to her own school's dramatic progress leading to its removal from double probation status. Kathy received a National Literacy Award from the James Flannigan Foundation and UPS last year.

Kathy's success as a teacher was built on the determination to go beyond the status quo for the sake of children. Kathy graduated from

Indiana State University with a B.A. in Education and a reading endorsement in 1983. She completed her Masters Degree at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) three years later. For many years, Kathy taught at Indianapolis Public Schools. After transferring to a school near her home, Kathy faced a situation which tested her resolve as a teacher. The teaching philosophy embraced by the administration rejected formal learning. Teachers were forbidden to have text books or skills charts in the classroom.

Of this experience, Kathy says, "The principal made sure you did what she said or you stood the chance of being on the 'hit list.' I withstood this environment for three years until I started feeling oppressed. I was losing my creativity and did not want to come to school. I felt like I was dying inside. I knew I was a good teacher and that God put me on earth to fulfill that position, but was I to continue to be in a building where things were so stressful and were not allowed to teach isolated skills? I was supposed to be a reading specialist, but I didn't know how to teach phonics."

Deeply discouraged with a system which was leaving kids without the most basic skills, Kathy took one year off on to home school her own son. During this time, she met a woman named Mercedes Russow, a 79-year-old lady who introduced her to a direct, systematic phonics approach to teaching reading called the "Direct Approach Method". This program was developed in the late 1950's by Mercedes' mother, the late Pauline Banks, a former Indianapolis Public School Teacher.

Mrs. Russow gave Kathy the skills and the hope she needed to return to the classroom. Since then, her success as a reading teacher has drawn the attention of teachers and principals alike. She divides her time between teaching children and other teachers.

Her workshops are full. Speaking of last year's fall seminar, Kathy states, "The meeting room was packed with teachers from all over Indianapolis who attended the training sessions in May and June to brush up on their phonics and word attack skills. Private school teachers, recently graduated "prospective" teachers, tutors, parents, principals, and Indianapolis Public school teachers and assistants from schools 14, 21, 37, 42, 48, 68, 81, 93, and 103 learned how to supplement their existing curriculum with the simple yet effective techniques of Direct Approach Phonics."

Kathy's success is an inspiration. Rather than accept a system that left some children behind, she sought the skills that were needed for a successful reading program, and now she is passing these skills on to others. Sound reading instruction is needed in Indiana. Kathy herself points out, "As far as education in general, in the schools where I go, I see wonderful, dedicated teachers who a lot of times are spinning their wheels trying to think, 'What is it that I need to do to improve what we're already doing?' Probably the most consistent thing I hear from teachers is the lack of training. From their university training they don't feel adequately prepared to teach reading, I see good things, but a lot of frustration."

Sadly, many of our students across the country do not have mastery of this basic skill of reading. The 1998 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) has found that

69% of 4th grade students are reading below the proficient level and that 85% of minority 4th grade students, most of whom are in Title I programs, are reading below the proficient level. Many of these students will end up in special education.

Studies indicate that at least half of the students being placed in Special Education programs have not been taught to read. The cost of Special Education—federal, state and local—is exceeding \$60 billion each year. The cost to those who never learn to read adequately is much higher. The job prospects for functionally illiterate adults are slim. Opportunities for those who cannot read are few.

Reading is fundamental. To ensure mastery of these skills, correct teaching methodology is essential. According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development the ability to read depends on one's understanding of the relationship between letters and the speech sounds they represent. Intensive instruction in phonics teaches this skill—the 26 letters used to symbolize about 44 speech sounds and the most common ways they may be spelled.

The National Reading Panel's report on successful reading strategies which was released on April 13, 2000 echoes this point. After reviewing 30 years of reading research, the reading panel found that the most effective reading programs include instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary.

The research in support of intensive, systematic phonics is widely available yet teaching colleges often neglect to provide their students with the skills to teach this body of knowledge. Too often, teachers like Kathy graduate without the tools to successfully teach reading. These teachers are deeply devoted to children and want to teach the best they can, yet they lack essential teaching skills. Until teaching schools adopt successful reading instruction methods, the only place teachers can learn these is in workshops like the ones Kathy provides.

This is but one of the reasons Kathy is an education hero. In addition to helping children learn to read, she is providing other teachers the means to become excellent teachers. She is fighting the fight against illiteracy and arming others to do the same. Because of teachers like Kathy, I am hopeful that the literacy deficit in our country will become a thing of the past. It is for this reason that I will be presenting Kathy with a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for her service to Indiana next week. Her commitment to children and literacy is outstanding.

I would like to thank the National Right to Read Foundation for selecting this wonderful Hoosier to receive the Patrick Groff Teacher of the Year Award.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak about this very special woman. I am reminded of the words of Historian Henry Brooks Adams who once said, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."